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FEATURES

En Ka Society encourages residents to join and give back to Winchester

WENDALL WATERS | CORRESPONDENT

January 21, 2026 . 6:00 AM — 4 min read

You can always spot members of the En Ka Society at Winchester community events, with their trademark blue smocks and welcoming smiles. En Ka is now holding its annual membership drive. COURTESY PHOTO/EN KA SOCIETY

The En Ka Society is inviting women in the community to join its to give back to Winchester. The deadline to apply for this year's new

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member group is Feb. 1.

“We do an annual deadline because we like to bring in a whole bunch of women at the same time,” says En Ka Membership Co-Chair Ginger Hanson. “We like to bring in a group together so they can try everything out together for a year.”

The En Ka Society leadership encourages women in the community to come and take part in the organization. COURTESY PHOTO/EN KA SOCIETY

New members have the opportunity to learn together about the various aspects of the organization, including how the pantry operates, what’s involved in running En Ka’s annual fair, the social services the organization provides, fundraising, and how the grant process works.

Last year 16 people signed up, Hanson says, including her own daughter, who is 24 and the youngest member. The oldest member is in her mid-90s.

“At one point, we had a grandmother, a mother, and a daughter, once,” Hanson says.

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En Ka is open to women of all ages and, Hanson says, there is always a way for people to participate, no matter what stage of life they're in. One member, for example, was over 100 years old, but would still come to meetings and play the piano.

En Ka annual events

Hanson says the organization has several major fundraisers each year.

"The biggest one is our fair, the third weekend of May every year, and all the kids, including mine, every year look forward to it," she says.

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The annual En Ka Fair is a big fundraiser for the society each spring. COURTESY PHOTO/EN KA SOCIETY

The fair, she adds, isn't just about rides. Members might make a
raffle off, and burgers and lobster rolls are for sale. Members wea

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functional light blue smocks with big pockets while working all aspects of the event.

“We have our own flavor to it,” Hanson says. “It’s got a really good hometown feel.”

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There’s also the annual En Ka Turkey Trot, and the numbers for that have skyrocketed, she says.

“We started doing a turkey trot during the pandemic because we couldn’t do the fair and other things that we normally did,” Hanson says.

Giving back to Winchester

En Ka also started a food pantry during the pandemic in response to needs in the community. They already had a thrift shop, which is both a community service and a way to fundraise, and the pantry complements it.

It’s a small pantry, Hanson says, but it features fresh produce, and a Cummings Foundation grant earmarked for social services has enabled En Ka to also offer chicken and frozen fish, plus staples like socks, tampons and detergent.

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The En Ka Society holds many community events each year, but it also encourages its members to come together and celebrate one another and their accomplishments. COURTESY PHOTOS/EN KA SOCIETY

Clients come in once a month and get what they need. If members hear someone in the community is having a difficult time because of a house fire or some other major life event, En Ka will reach out to help them.

In addition, Hanson says, En Ka partners with social workers in the community. The social workers identify needs and En Ka provides support.

“The social workers know they can come to us and we’re here to help,” she says.

Grants that support Winchester

En Ka offers grants quarterly to help organizations and people of all ages in Winchester, which now has a population of about 23,000. Over the last 25 years, the organization has awarded grants to public school programs, the library, theaters and museums, VNA hospice care, Winchester Go… Friends of Upper Mystic Lake, Meals on Wheels, Wright-Locke Fa… many more groups and projects.

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“We’re not a big town but we’re very happy to support each other,” Hanson says. “I think it’s a very friendly town.”

En Ka has about 210 members right now. During the pandemic, Hanson says, the groups of new members were very small, but they’ve bounced back since then, with 16 joining up last year.

What are her membership goals for this year? Hanson laughs and says, “I’m a little competitive. I want 17.”

With 210 members, there is always room for more in the En Ka Society. In fact, the group is holding its annual membership drive, which ends Feb. 1. COURTESY PHOTO/EN KA SOCIETY

But, she says, the number is not important.

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"Whether we have a big class or a small class, as long as we get people who are interested and dedicated, that's all that really matters," she says.

To learn more about the En Ka Society, its history, events, and projects, visit the group's website.

Wendall Waters has over 35 years of experience in publishing. She is a former reporter/editor with several papers, including the Beverly Citizen, Malden Observer, Ipswich Chronicle, and Tri-Town Transcript. She also covered environmental issues for Wicked Local and Gannett Media. She is one of the co-founders of Gotta Know Medford.

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community

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: The Winchester community came together last week at the Griffin Museum of Photography for the inaugural Black History and Culture Celebration, an evening filled with music, student creativity, and powerful messages about equity, unity, and the enduring legacy of Black

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FEATURES

Winchester residents share more snow photos

Well, Winchester, we made it through the weekend with only a coating of snow that amounted to nothing on Sunday afternoon. But during the Feb. 22-23 blizzard, Winchester News once again asked residents to send their snow photos. And here is what we received! Solmaz Amirnazmi said her daughters and

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FEATURES

Winchester Community Music School set to expand, upgrade

The big events in Winchester Community Music School always take place in Nichols Performance Hall. With the school and its performances’ growing in popularity, the hall and many of its amenities are due for an upgrade. The performance hall is one of the main areas that the school seeks to

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By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. Set in the 1920s, this iconic production is sure to leave the audience wanting more. Performances will

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EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents ‘Syldason: You Are Welcome Here’

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and

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his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

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as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

March 4, 2026

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